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DEDICATED

TO THE

INHABITANTS OF NORFOLK.

59678

THE

Pearl of Norfolk,

"Funde merum genio."

PERSIUS.

BY THE

Count of Courson Curzon.

NORFOLK, VA.:
FOGARTY, PUBLISHER,
Norfolk News Company.

1879

1879

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Inhabitants of Norfolk.

NORFOLK, VA:

VIRGINIAN BOOK AND JOB PRINT, 56 AND 58 ROANOKE AVENUE.

1874.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

A short time since I found myself passing the evening in the midst of a very pleasant company. We conversed of literature; and a lady bore away the charms of the conversation by the brilliancy of her repartees; a complete education had developed in her the natural gifts of her mind. Addressing me suddenly she said: But, Mr. ——, you being a writer, why don't you write something on Norfolk?

But, madam, I replied, I do not know the history of the country or its legends. What, replied she, is there then nothing remarkable about Norfolk, if you speak but of the beauties which render the country so celebrated?

I take you at your word then, replied I. It is always agreeable to speak of Beauties, Flowers and Pearls. I promise you, therefore, "*The Pearl of Norfolk.*"

Having arrived at my home, I made the following hasty sketch, and a few days after I carried it to her.

Excuse me, madam, if I present you with a rather incomplete work, not having time to meditate on any precise order of writing this history, nor wishing to

introduce into it any romantic adventures which usually decorate novels of this kind. Besides, there is nothing I detest more than romances. I never read them—all the details of what is called inside life, low life, domestic quarrels and saloon brawls are repugnant to my feelings. The development of a thought or a sentiment ought always to be sufficient to the reader.

In the history of Rene, what you call intrigue, does not exist. In the Proverbs of Musset, in the Intermezzo of Heine, in Werther of Goethe, in the novels of the two celebrated Russian writers, Pouchkin and Lhermontoff, who perished so unfortunately in a duel in defending his wife's honor, and of which the novel "A Hero of our Own Times" caused so profound a sensation in the literary world of Russia, and in so many other minor works which owe their character solely to the brilliancy of style, to the delicacy of sentiment and the poetry of thought.

I have endeavoured, therefore, as in Atala and Rene this strange aberration of the heart, to sail on the waves of these passions which are excited by the natural emotions of the heart. The task was difficult after such a master mind as Chateaubriand, and if in gleaning I have found only a few ears of corn, you will, nevertheless, give me credit for good intentions. Religious sentiment pervades all the works of Chateaubriand; Dante

and Homer, the great Poets of antiquity, are replete with religion.

Besides, to be frank, I have not the time to devote to such a work at present. In fact, I must go to New York where I have to publish two works expected of me a year since. I am thus behind hand. My health, impaired by the foggy climate of London, after a stay of some years in the tropical regions of India and Africa, has forced me to seek under the beautiful skies of Virginia, a renovation of my strength; thanks to the salubrious air of your favored country, and to the science of your celebrated Dr T. B. Ward, I feel myself born again. New life flows in my veins, and now, like an ingrate, I leave you.

On my return, I shall resume this rough sketch in a second edition with the stereotyped phrase, "reviewed, corrected and considerably augmented," and I will make of it, if I can, a work worthy of your Pearl.

This little episode on Chateaubriand is then but the prelude of what I proposed some time since. I wish to follow his footsteps upon American soil, and travel over the places which he has visited, even as far as the Rocky Mountains. I have seen him in his old days during which he often spoke of our common country Breton, and these remembrances inspire me still. I have already followed him in countries which he has

visited, and I have been fortunate enough to derive some benefit from it.

In 1860 I passed the winter in Venice, after having travelled throughout Europe, and before setting out for Egypt, where I went to see Cairo and the Pyramids; then in Arabia, Mount Sinai, where God gave Moses the commandments; the East Indies, Bombay and Calcutta, the Island of Ceylon, the Bourbon and Mauritius Islands, the Cape of Good Hope, St. Helena, Brazil and Senegal on the coast of Africa.

One evening at Venice I went in my Gondola down the grand canal, bordered on either side by magnificent palaces, the marble souvenirs of the opulent Venice. I was dreaming under the enchanting sky of these Venetian evenings, when my gondolier suddenly interrupted me in my reverie by pointing out to me the palace in which Lord Byron resided. I caused the gondola to be stopped and rapped at the door of the palace, which I visited. They presented me with an old register in which travellers inscribed their names, and in turning over the leaves I found the following words written: "To the generous manes of Byron," signed Chateaubriand—homage rendered to the hero of Missolonghi, by the Breton Poet.

At Bombay I met one of our Breton authors, to whom the "*Review of the two Worlds*" owes so many

beautiful pages, Mr. Lejean, Consul for France, in Abyssinia, and who had just escaped from that country, saving himself from the fate of the English Consul Cameron, who was imprisoned by the order of King Theodore. He arranged to travel through Persia and visit the Holy Land, whence he sent me some notes of the souvenirs left by Chateaubriand. Captain Burton, whom I had known at Paris, had started across Persia before him, to go to Egypt to discover the source of the Nile, like Dr. Livingston, the mention of whom will recall to mind the American hero and intrepid traveller, Stanley. Whilst I was thus speaking—one is so boastful when far travelled—Madam ——— was reading my “Pearl.” I think she had not heard even a word of my discourse

Well, said she, resuming the conversation in her turn, and with a rather suspicious tone of voice and gesture, every writer, every poet, has some divinity, a lady of his thoughts as it were, of whom he draws a portrait in his writings. Who is then this Pearl?

Your question is embarrassing, madam. I cannot answer it. However, let me be frank with you; although the amiable proprietor of the “Virginian,” Mr. Glennan, does not wish that we should make a selection of a particular Pearl, since there are so many

of them among us; undoubtedly he meant to say—when all are Pearls in Norfolk. Most assuredly this would be the opinion of Mr. James Barron Hope, the eminent writer, who is so well able to present to the public, Pearls of literature and poetry when he wishes to retire for a moment from the arena of serious politics.

Well, each pious and devout young lady, who prays before the altar can recognize herself in Flora. My Pearl is a bird of paradise.

And each will be mistaken, replied she, with a decided warmth of expression, except the true Pearl, concealed under the name of Flora, in fact your dear ideal; and she expects with the greatest anxiety the publication of your book.

You are incorrigible, madam. “*Honne soit qui mal y pense.*” In the deserts of Africa, upon the banks of the Nile, I made acquaintance with the crocodile. In the jungles of India with the Bengal tiger. In the forests of Princess Island in Senegal, of the Boa Constrictor.

Of all animals, the being the most wicked and cruel was *man*; I do not add “*and woman*,” for I have never known any but good.

Now you may give yourself up to all the imaginary suppositions, invent every possible means, still you will

never succeed in triumphing over my patience, my impassability. I have such an independent character that I never trouble myself about what others think of me, and I never believe in the ill which may be spoken to me of my neighbour.

Well, madam, you are right, a thousand times right; in fact, ladies are always right. Yes, I have found the Pearl of Norfolk. I will show her to you; it is Flora. I have made a voyage around the world to discover it.

In fine, madam, be good enough to say to all the young ladies whom you may visit, not to be alarmed at the fate of the unfortunate "Flora," every bride does not thus perish. "God forbid!"

PROLOGUE.

No pearl ever lay, under Oman's green water,
More pure in its shell, than thy spirit in thee.

THOMAS MOORE.

FLORA,

Do you remember the day when first you met
with Rene Chateaubriand in the Holy Basilica?

Do you remember the feelings of deep emotion that
thrilled your souls?

Do you remember the evening prayer in the presence
of the Eternal, amid the growing shades of night?

Do you remember that festival day? The religious
chants were hushed, the organ had breathed forth its
last dying notes of deepest melody, the profound silence
was broken only by the voice of the aged priest enton-
ing the sublime preface of the sacrifice, when two little
birds of rich and brilliant plumage descending from
the dome of the Holy temple, hovered above the taber-
nacle, and united their joyous notes to the chant of the
sacred minister.

Oh! how their melody enraptured and entranced the
soul! Their warbling so sweet, so pure, so innocent, ex-
cited emotion in every heart Poor little birds! beaten
by the storm, you sought refuge at the altar. Tossed
about by the tempests of the world, you also, Rene and
Flora, sought your refuge and safety under the shadow

of the Tabernacle. Those birds were types and emblems of you. Messengers of God, the Almighty, they came to blend their pure and innocent harmony with yours. Their innocence was the image of the angelic purity of your hearts. Like them in the sincerity of your faith, in the grandeur and sublimity of your sentiments, you have winged your flight on a bright and luminous cloud to go and chant a never-ending canticle of praise and thanksgiving to the Most High in the infinite regions of bliss.

Do you remember the ocean, and when seated on the beach you unbosomed to one another, amid the murmuring of the waves, your dreams of future happiness?

Do you remember the leafy woods, when you gazed with admiration on the splendid scenery of dear and lovely Virginia, and culled handsfull of odoriferous flowers, the snow white daises, whose purity and whiteness were but a reflex of the innocence and loveliness of your own soul?

Do you remember the sunset on the water; the bright horizon, tinged with the gorgeous purple and golden hues of the aurora borealis, expanding fanlike over the firmament its resplendent gleams of fire?

Do you remember the charming evenings when in the pale light of the moon, and under a sky bespangled by the hand of Divine Omnipotence, you drank in from your dreams a delightful melancholy?

Do you remember the lovely days of Norfolk, sparkling in the noonday sun, which, like an essence of supreme emanation poured out its torrents of light?

Do you remember the intellectual, literary and per-

fectly harmonious life, which animating and refreshing the senses like a celestial dew, begets peace and contentment in those pure souls whom the world has not corrupted?

Do you remember, in fine, the rustic chapel, where we loved to pray, and which young maidens were wont to adorn with flowers on festive days; the melodious chants, the ravishing voices, ascending to heaven with prayers and the perfume of incense, whilst the venerable missionary pronounced benediction on the faithful?

Do you remember?

Such are the reminiscences I offer you in these few lines; may they enter and remain deeply graven in your heart, as they are in mine, and if, perchance, I appear to you in your dreams by night, seeking in Norfolk the shades of the past, speak kindly to the apparition and bid it—come again.

THE PEARL OF NORFOLK.

I.

One morning about the beginning of November, 1794, a brig might have been observed near Capes Henry and Charles, gradually revealing itself through the dense and heavy fog, and steering towards the coast. The morning presented a threatening aspect. The swelling sea, with its deep and mournful murmuring, rolled its foam-tipped waves to the shore. The restless and fitful winds would sometimes blow a gale and would then die away as if their breath were exhausted. The hazy and rayless atmosphere producing in the observer feelings vague and indefinable, weighed heavily on the waters. Was this a prognostic of a day of calm, or was it a sign premonitory of a formidable tempest? About noon all doubts were at an end. The clouds rolling together, drifted in a dark and

heavy mass. They had attained a force that was irresistible. Everything bent or was shattered by its violence. A terrible hurricane was unchained and had burst upon the coast.

In the meantime the vessel driven forward by the violence of the wind, and tossed about by the fury of the sea, seemed at one moment to be elevated to the clouds by the raging billows, and the next to be engulfed in the deep abyss that yawned beneath.

The vessel was so damaged by the tempest that she was leaking in every part; huge waves were continually washing over her deck, and sweeping into the sea man after man of her entire crew; then yielding to a formidable breaker she sank and was covered by the tide. Nothing was seen of the vessel but the tops of the masts appearing above the water. Some pieces of drift-wood were floating here and there upon the waves and the surrounding *debris* indicated only the direction of the unfortunate wreck.

The inhabitants of the neighbourhood hastened to the scene, but what assistance could they render in their powerless position? The waves washed upon the shore only some pieces of broken masts, cordage and shattered planks.

Suddenly a cry was heard issuing from the crowd: a man washed ashore!! A young man was lying on the beach, his hands clinging convulsively to a piece of wood, which he had wrenched from the wreck of the vessel; his face pale, deathlike and bleeding, being torn and bruised by the *debris* of the wreck, retained an expression of noble pride and dignity. They carried

him to a neighboring house, and as he had only fainted he soon returned to consciousness after some wise and timely efforts at restoration. This young man was Rene de Chateaubriand!

What sad remembrances does not this name recall! Rene, impelled by the passionate ardor and eagerness of his youthful heart, to pursue apart from the world, a life obscure and unknown by men, but whose secret melody was ever resounding within the horizon of his own soul, had bidden adieu to his paternal roof, to seek in the new world that congenial and harmonious concert of which his own soul was the faithful echo. His first step on American soil was attended by misfortune and shipwreck.

Scarcely had he recovered from his misfortune than his mind was wholly occupied with the thought of returning thanks to God, who had mercifully preserved him—the only one of the whole crew.

He went to Norfolk and there took up his residence. Gratitude for his preservation urged him to traverse the streets of the city, seeking for the cross which would indicate to him the place consecrated to divine worship.

At the corner of a street he beheld an open chapel. He entered, and falling on his knees, he invoked the Omnipotent.

The day was already declining—the pointed arches were casting their lengthened shadows, and by the pale light of a lamp which was burning near the altar, he observed in the church but a single human form, revealing itself indistinctly amid the surrounding shade

and obscurity. It was a young maiden, graceful as a young palm tree of Delos.

She was bowed down immovable in prayer.

This sudden apparition filled his mind with an indescribable charm of poetry. Meeting thus in prayer at the foot of the altar, with an unknown Eve, adorned with candor and innocence, his soul was filled with ecstatic emotions. He gazed on her for a moment in silent admiration. Her piety so artless, so ardent, so expansive, inspired him with a sort of reverence. He imagined he beheld the angel of prayer, a celestial being who had descended from heaven to communicate religious faith to mortals.

How happy she is, said Rene to himself, to possess such an ardent faith! My God would that I could pray with the same fervor,

While thus stricken with admiration he received suddenly the grace of the same fervor, like St. Paul cast to the earth by divine grace, on his road to Damascus.

He prostrated himself to the earth, his soul illumined by a ray of celestial light.

Henceforth his whole life will be consecrated to the service of the Eternal.

Silently he left the holy place without being observed by the young maiden. He did not wish to disturb the pious outpouring of a soul adoring its God.

This religious sentiment will doubtless appear strange to the sceptics of our days. Faith is wanting in our age.

Chateaubriand had passed his early youth at the

brilliant Court of Versailles, and experienced the attractions of easy corruption, presented by a fashionable life at this epoch when the evils of the revolution burst upon him, as also upon all those of the nobility who emigrated from their country, being unable to live amid the horrors of the revolutionary tempest.

Then he recalled to mind the first religious sentiments that a Christian and cherished mother had awakened in his infant heart. Misfortune causes reflection.

He called to mind the paternal castle, surrounded by a dense forest—the gothic chapel, where evening prayers were offered, in the presence of all the servants of the household. He cleaved firmly to the cross. Faith is so sweet; it has so many charms when it proceeds from the heart, and when it accompanies us to the tomb it cheers us by pointing out a celestial life beyond, whilst hopeless and despairing scepticism presents only annihilation and the destiny of the brute creation.

He returned to his hospitable abode, but the image of the young maiden recurred continually to his mind. He had obtained but a glimpse of her, but his heart was inclined to superstition. The meeting seemed to him supernatural, and he habituated himself to regard it in that light. He considered it a revelation of his destiny. She will become his wife.

A thought superior to every human consideration inspires him with a desire for this union. The sublimity of her angelic piety will lead back from infidelity souls that have strayed away through doubt, and are already

hanging over the abyss of despair. Her charity will wipe away the tears of the unfortunate, and the afflicted will find in her their support and consolation. The love of her neighbor will be her guide through life.

He, Rene, artificer of thought, will arm himself with his pen, and will pray God for heavenly inspiration to combat false doctrines; he will proclaim in his writings eternal truths.

II.

Rene passed several months in vague reveries. He formed in his mind an ideal of a cherished being, a divinity of his thoughts. As soon as the shades of night had gathered round him, it was her vision that revealed itself to him—a sweet phantom, a cherished illusion, that rocked him in his agitated sleep.

When the church bells called the faithful to prayer in the house of God, Rene attended these regularly. His fervent prayers were inspired by a heavenly piety. The arch of the holy place where he had seen for the first time this sublime vision, always attracted his attention, but alas! she was no longer there!

One Sunday after divine service he hastily left the church. His countenance betrayed deep and melancholy thought. He dipped his fingers in the font of holy water, and in turning towards the altar he beheld a young maiden dressed with elegant simplicity, and her eyes modestly cast down. An icy chill ran through his members. With trembling hand he offered her the holy water.

It was she ! He could no longer doubt of it. He stood as one petrified. The young maiden passed before him calm but evidently astonished. The feverish excitement of the unknown had not escaped her.

The drops of perspiration were trickling down his forehead — his hand trembled. He rushed out of the church into the street, passed beyond the limits of the city before he became conscious of his whereabouts, and entering a thick woods that surrounded the city, found himself after some hours travel in the open country. He had wandered far away, and night was rapidly approaching, dark and gloomy. At this instant he perceives a light through the trees, and advancing toward it soon found himself standing before a modest country house. At the door stood an elderly lady who appeared trying to discern through the darkness the person who was advancing.

On seeing Rene she made a movement as of surprise at the appearance of a stranger, but the pale countenance and wearied appearance of the young man inspired her at the same time with a feeling of compassion.

Rene had walked the entire day and appeared exhausted.

The young stranger then advancing towards the lady and raising his hat respectfully, said to her with a somewhat tremulous accent, "Madam, can you inform me what road I must take to return to Norfolk? for I have been wandering out of my way since morning."

"To Norfolk!" she replied. "Why, you are now more than twelve miles from there. You do not see n

able to make your way back this evening. Sit down on this bench," said she, pointing to a bench beneath two pomegranite trees in bloom. I am expecting my son from the city; it will not be long until his return, and then you can speak to him and obtain the information you desire.

"Jenny," said she, to an old negress who hearing some one conversing with her mistress, was led by curiosity to make her appearance, "Jenny, give the gentleman a chair. The poor child seems perfectly worn out."

The gallop of a horse was heard at this moment approaching. "It is my son," said the old lady, and she disappeared among the trees in order to meet him.

A few moments after they appeared together; his mother had related to him the adventure of Rene; he dismounted from his horse and advanced towards him.

"My mother" said he, has informed me of your mis-adventure. You are a stranger and could not return alone to-night to the city. Accept our hospitality and to-morrow morning we will return together to the city.

He took Rene by the arm and conducted him into the house. He was nearly of the same age as Rene, with an amiable and intelligent face, and polite and affable manners.

Supper being served he caused Rene to be seated near him.

"You are a foreigner," said he to him. "You appear to be a Frenchman."

Rene recounted to him the circumstances that led

him to Norfolk, in which he seemed to be deeply interested. The clock struck the hour of midnight.

"We have only two apartments in the house, but I will conduct you to an old pavillion at the end of the garden, in which I have had a bed arranged for you. You can sleep there for the night."

"It is now more than thirty years since any one slept there, but I suppose you are not afraid?" Rene, at the mention of fear, answered with lofty pride, "Sir, I am a Knight of Malta, and consequently a man without fear and without reproach."

I merely spoke of that replied the young man, because the tradition of the neighborhood hands down strange stories in regard to this pavillion. Diabolical noises, as of chains rattling, accompanied with doleful cries, are said to be heard here during the night, and that the last persons who slept here disappeared suddenly, and no one could learn what had become of them, and since thirty years no one has lodged here.

These are only superstitions, replied Rene—fairy and goblin tales, believed and told by silly people. Make yourself easy. I shall sleep undisturbed. Have I not moreover my two faithful companions, which I never part with in my travels, and he drew forth two small pistols from his pocket.

The two young men crossed the garden, and at the end of a long avenue of magnolias, found themselves before an old dilapidated pavillion. The young man opened the door with a large rusty key. He led Rene into a large room, from the walls of which the plaster had fallen away.

Rene thanked his host, who wished him good night, telling him that he would return at an early hour next morning to awake him.

When left alone, Rene began to reflect on the events of the day. The remembrance of the young maiden never departed from his mind. He walked to and fro for a long time, thinking of her, then wearied and fatigued he threw himself upon his knees, said his prayers and retired to his bed, after placing his two pistols near the head of his bed.

The excitement of the day, the fatigues of his journey and the emotions of his agitated heart, had brought on a slight fever, consequently his sleep was troubled, his breathing difficult and painful.

Suddenly he hears a strange noise—the sound of clanking chains. A trap door opens near his bed and men with hideous countenances, armed with axes and sabres, and trailing iron chains, which made a most terrible and unearthly noise, were seen issuing forth and approaching towards his bed.

Rene, on beholding this, felt a chill running through every fibre of his body, but habituated to danger, and always self-possessed in the face of peril, he quickly stretched out his hand, and grasping one of his pistols, fired at the first one who was approaching.

The ball struck the ceiling, dislodging a large piece of the plaster, which, falling, covered him dust and debris.

Rene at the same moment awoke. It was a dream.

In the morning when his host, whose name was McNamara, came to awake him, Rene related to him

the event of the night, and pointed out to him the hole that the ball had made in the ceiling.

They returned early to Norfolk. Rene gave him his Maltese cross, ornamented with a *fleur de lis*, to present to his mother as a souvenir of the hospitality he had received from her.

McNamara conducted him to the church and introduced him to the old Catholic missionary, Pere Souel.

Pere Souel became thenceforward the friend and confidant of Rene. We will meet him again at another time when we will also find Rene seated at the hospitable fire of the Natchez, and bowed down by a new and overwhelming misfortune. There under the wigwam of the prairies, beneath the tent of the old Choctaw, smoking the calumet of peace, Rene will relate to Pere Souel the history of Rene and Atala, which has charmed the world by the magic of its style.

When Rene and McNamara separated it was with a promise to meet again soon ; they were already like old friends, united together by a bond of mutual sympathy.

III.

Rene continued to visit the church. The young maiden had observed him. A mutual but silent sympathy, and a communion of faith had already united them.

Rene had an opportunity to observe her whilst she was praying

Her brow was marked by grace and dignity, and bore the impress of sincere religious poetry. She was tall and graceful, whilst her luxuriant black hair flowed in wavy tresses poetically around her head.

A bewitching smile seemed playing constantly on her delicately formed mouth. The countenance is the mirror of the soul, and a sweetness and indescribable goodness always betrayed themselves in hers.

You would feel yourself irresistibly drawn towards her by her evident sincerity and truthfulness, and when her eyes, lightly shaded by her gracefully arched eyebrows, were directed upon you, it seemed as if their glance penetrated the very depths of your soul, and filled your heart with a sudden thrill of emotion.

Her simple yet dignified manner heightened still more the charm and grace of her person. She seemed like a Castellana of the Middle Ages—like an enchantress with letters patent of aristocratic nobility.

He learned afterwards that to all these natural endowments there was added the gift of a most happy intellect. She loved study and applied herself to it most ardently. She had no taste for the pleasures of the world.

Sensible and good she was the refuge and protectress of the unfortunate. Even when a child she was wont to share with her little companions the trifles that are usually given to children, and oftentimes deprived herself, that she might contribute to the pleasure and enjoyment of others.

Grown now to womanhood, the sentiments of her heart were revealed by her charity. Victims of cruel fate would come and relate to her their griefs and sorrows; she would weep with them and console them.

If she possessed all the charms of womanly beauty, particularly was she distinguished and marked out in advance as a favorite of heaven by that goodness of heart alluded to in the sacred text which says that, “Much shall be forgiven her because she has loved much”—words uttered by Christ himself who gave even his life for the love of humanity; it was this quality of heart that Lacordaire, in one of his brilliant improvisations, designated as the most divine gift, when he said, “I prefer the dust of the heart to the dust of genius.” This divine flame of charity emanating from God formed the halo that encircled her virginal brow,

and caused every heart to open to her. Hence she was called the Pearl of Norfolk, though her name was Flora, the emblem of perfume and beauty, and when she would pass along the street every one would be eager to salute her and greet her with a smile.

This silent sympathy which was mutually experienced by them at a distance, this magnetic current between two hearts, which understood one another, though no word had been spoken or avowal made, finally terminated one day by drawing them together.

Chateaubriand met the young person one evening at an entertainment. He was introduced to her. It seemed to him that this was the happiest day of his life. Every sound of her voice entered deeply into his soul. It was like celestial music—an enchanting harmony, which thrilled every fibre of his organization, and filled his soul with the intoxication of delight.

So long had they known one another that their meeting was free from all embarrassment. They had already been friends even before they had spoken to one another.

Several months elapsed since this interview, during which time they saw one another frequently in the same house. A sweet union of souls was formed between them; they lived but for one another. Every Sunday after divine service Rene accompanied the young maiden to the door of her dwelling.

Endowed with a firm and energetic character, Flora was accustomed to reflect for a long time before forming a resolution, but no sooner had she decided than she would begin to carry her purpose through. There

was then no hesitation or wavering. It was, therefore, that after leaving one of these evening parties, at which she had spoken to Rene with less restraint and with more gaiety than usual, she said to him :

“You will come, will you not, to Pere Souel’s mass to-morrow morning. I wish to see you there.”

Rene signified by a respectful bow that he would do so, and then withdrew.

Early the next morning as the clock was heard striking five, she was seen wending her way to church as she was in the habit of doing every morning.

Rene was standing there leaning against the wall of the vestibule. He had been there since three o’clock, so great was his impatience. He felt a presentiment that this meeting at the church would have an influence on his destiny.

When Flora made her appearance, he went to meet her, and bowed respectfully.

“Here, she said, is what I intended for you this long time.”

Rene saw a gold ring shining on her finger; transported with joy he took it from her hand—it was her token of fidelity. At the same time he drew from his own finger a ring set with a stone, on which was engraved his coat of arms, and which for eight hundred years had been transmitted as an heir-loom in the family, from father to the eldest son, who bore the family title.

This is my pledge, said Rene; you will return it when —

Flora took the ring, and inclining her head, entered the church.

No sooner was the mass of Father Souel ended than Rene, rising, took Flora by the hand, and advanced towards the altar, at the moment the priest was descending from it.

“ Give us your blessing, Father, said he; only an hour ago were we affianced, and some day you will unite us in marriage.”

Father Souel extended his hand over them, invoking the Eternal blessing.

This union, the sentiment of which was revealed at the foot of the holy altar, was sealed and consecrated by mutual pledges of fidelity.

IV.

Rene from this moment commenced to believe in his happiness. During the succeeding days he manifested the charm of an apparent tranquility, though he was nevertheless a prey to a secret internal agitation of heart, and even sometimes to a settled calm of dejection, which not unfrequently proceeds from a state of mental and moral prostration.

Alone with his own thoughts—a stranger in a strange city—he sought refuge in the intellectual and literary world—in that charming life where the labor of thought is all-absorbing day and night, and relieves the weary hours of their dullness and their long and sterile *ennui*.

Though young, his mind trained in the severe school of adversity and misfortune, had attained the development of maturer years. He reflected on the depravity of men, and the events that afflicted his unhappy country. He beheld with grief, society denying Christ under pretext of philosophic progress. It had denied and lost its God, and without law or restraint was hast-

ening rapidly to dissolution, a prey to morbid doubt and scepticism.

Then it was that he conceived a plan. He will re-establish the cross in the hearts of men. He will point out to them the noble and sublime end of life—an end celestial and eternal. He will point out to minds electrified and led astray by false and pompous declamations, the path that leads to true peace and happiness, which since the Christian era has been taught for eighteen centuries. It was then that he conceived the plan of his immortal work, "the Genius of Christianity."

A refugee on American soil, which had been watered with the blood of the Breton nobility, and having enrolled himself in the crusade for liberty, he admired in a special manner the free institutions of this country, which accord to each man the exercise of that inborn right of liberty and independence.

Being a Breton and a nobleman, he was as free and independent as the air of the forests and mountains of his native home. He had imbibed with his native air that spirit of liberty which every honest man claims in conscience as a right conferred by God on his rational creatures, whilst he deplored at the same time the crimes committed by misguided men in the name of that liberty which they outraged.

This liberty he defended when he attained to influence and power in his own country; he invoked its sacred name as the emblem of his political principles.

The regenerating breath of his genius reanimated the

Government of the Restoration, the most liberal government that France had experienced for a century, and imparted inspiration to Villele, Royer Collard, Benjamin Constant and Montalambert

Such were the thoughts that were awakened in his mind by the confused voices of the solitude in which he had sought refuge. The grandeur and sublimity of the natural scenery were well calculated to entertain and develop these ideas. Nature, under the favored sky of Virginia, revealed to his eyes its sublime and poetic beauties. The pure, invigorating air, the myriad tinted horizon with its ever-shifting draperies of rich and gorgeous hue, the ethereal nights illumined by myriads of brightly twinkling stars, that studded the cloudless expanse of the firmament, the rich vegetation, the majestic and impenetrable forests, enlivened by its melodious inhabitants of bright and variegated plumage, and carpeted with fragrant flowers of every hue, the emerald dome of luxuriant foliage, shaken at times by the deep terrific peals of thunder and suddenly illumined by the rapid and frequent lightning flash—all this impressed him with the grandeur and majesty of the great Creator.

These poetic sentiments occurring to him amid his vague reveries, were the realization of his dreams during the nights of the spring time. He had already obtained a foretaste of them, on the vessel that bore him to these happy shores, whose balmy odors wafted by the breezes across the ocean, diffused an indescribable sweetness in his soul that anxiously yearned to wing its flight towards this happy clime. Transported, as it

were, out of the body, his soul obtained a glimpse of the delights of this charming country.

A mysterious presentiment, which seemed to come from heaven, made him anticipate this meeting with Flora. He was enraptured over this bright page of his existence, and obtained a glimpse of that cherished being which inebriated his soul with the perfume and delight of heavenly poetry. Her charming influence impressed in his soul an enchanted vision of happiness.

Frequently we portray in imagination the places we are about to visit and which we have never seen. Our souls fly as the electrical wings of thought beyond the limits of space, and deluded by fancy, we seem to enjoy a foretaste of the charming destiny that awaits us.

Beneath this luminous and transparent veil our existence rolls on, day by day, the scenes of life receiving therefrom their coloring and their form, and after the dream is over, leaving behind them a magnetic remembrance which has its essence in the immortality of the soul and its subtle and expansive nature.

Is not life one continual dream, and the days that succeed one another but gilded chimeras, darkened sometimes and obscured, and mingled smiles and tears?

When he wearied with this isolation Rene went to visit Pere Souel. It was long conversations with him that guided by his experience of the human heart that Rene derived those sublime ideas and philosophic doctrines of Christianity. Frequently were they seen for hours together conversing, seated under the widely-spreading branches of the trees, in the deep solitude of the forest, far from the distracting intrusion of men.

V.

Frequent and intimate relations followed between Rene and Flora, since their engagement. They frequently met by the sea-side, then Rene spoke to her of his native country, that was far beyond the sea ; of his beloved Bretagne shaded with numerous forests ; of the moss covered Cross seen at the winding of the path ; of the "Breton Prayer" that the shepherd sang at the decline of day, sitting upon the summit of the hillock, where his flock of sheep were quietly browsing.

The young lady listened to him with deep emotion. It was a mutual exchange of poetic perfume. It was in those interviews that Chateaubriand, who was already meditating his immortal work, "The Genius of Christianity," was inspired with the sublime ideas contained in his writings. At times it was a charming expression, a fervent thought, a naive and sublime description of the Christian Festivals. It was by times those moving and delicate traits of eloquence and feeling which the heart of a young lady only can produce.

Rene, on returning home in the evening, made a note

of them, and with his brilliant pen clothed and colored them in his poetic tableaux. Night surprised them very often in those conversations, walking together on the sea-shore. The evening bell tolling the "Angelus" awakened them from their reveries. Flora then began with her clear sonorous voice the canticle which Rene had dedicated to her. Her voice was lost upon the billows. The neighboring echo and the murmur of the waves responded and sang an accompaniment to her chant.

Frequently they visited together the poor and the afflicted, and when Flora's purse was empty, Rene placed his own at her disposal.

Every one spoke of the goodness, of the charity and of the piety of Flora.

They were often seen promenading together under the shade of the large trees, Rene sometimes gathering wild flowers in order to present Flora with a bouquet.

One evening when they were returning from one of these rural promenades, they met some wild young men near the city, who undulged in some unseemly remarks evidently intended for them.

Chateaubriand was very much hurt at their insulting sarcasms, and requested the young lady to excuse him for a moment, and directed his steps towards them, and with a grave aspect said, "Gentlemen, if you have so far forgotten yourselves as to insult a young, innocent girl, I demand of each of you immediate satisfaction. "*"Honnei soit qui mal y pense,"* and he presented his card, upon which was written The Viscount Chateaubriand; "give me, therefore, yours in exchange,

so that this matter can be settled satisfactorily, and to-morrow morning, at the entrance of this same grove, at sun-rise, the meeting can take place."

Then returning where he had left Flora, he accompanied her to her home. She had not the slightest knowledge of what had just passed, not having understood the full purport of the insult offered her, and no suspicion, whatever, of a slight having been intended.

Chateaubriand, after taking leave of Flora, engaged a horse and immediately started to consult with his friend McNamara, for they had become fast friends since their late interview in the country, and loved one another as brothers, sharing together their griefs and their joys.

McNamara approved of what Rene had done, and declared he would be his second in the duel and revenge his death if necessary.

Chateaubriand slept this night again in the famous Ghost Pavillion, but nothing troubled his sleep, and at day-break he was at the rendezvous.

The three young men, with their friends, soon afterwards appeared.

The combatants soon put themselves *en garde*, sword in hand, and although the combat was for a length of time lively and uncertain, Chateaubriand finally wounded his first two adversaries. Here a short stay of proceedings was demanded, and the witnesses wished to stop further bloodshed, declaring that honor was perfectly satisfied.

Chateaubriand refused to accede to this arrangement. It is not, said he, my own honor that I defend, but that

of outraged innocence; therefore I wish to have entire satisfaction.

The third was soon, also, put *hors de combat*, and in the last passage of arms, Rene received a slight sabre cut in the guard arm.

Just at this moment a piercing cry was heard, and Flora appeared at the end of the grove, pale and agitated. Being informed the evening before of what was going to happen, she made efforts to find Rene and entreat him not to expose himself on her account, but all her efforts to find him were useless. He had then gone to meet his friend McNamara.

Flora had passed the night in prayer, and early in the morning had formed the resolution to go out and throw herself between the combatants in order to stop the duel; but fatigue and emotion combined to retard her footsteps, and she did not arrive at the place of the meeting until the combat had just been finished. An old negress, her servant, followed and supported her through the ordeal.

McNamara advanced to meet Flora, and assured her that all the wounds given and received were but slight.

Rene was staunching, with his handkerchief, the blood that was flowing from his hand. when Father Souel was seen approaching, walking, apparently, with great difficulty. He came in the name of religion to use his influence in preventing the duel.

“My children,” cried the venerable old man, as soon as he was near enough to be heard, “God does not allow you to risk your life and that of your neighbor. You have come to tempt Divine Providence. Beware! lest you call down upon your heads His just anger and in-

dignation, and now swear to me that never, henceforth, will you have recourse to arms in order to avenge an injury. I may demand this oath of you, for I also, unfortunately, have experienced in my youth the evil effects of these worldly prejudices." Saying these words, he then threw back from his breast a fold of his mantle and exposed a brilliant cross of the order of St. Louis. Before taking holy orders he had served in the military profession and had earned his decorations and insignia of honor on hard fought fields of battle at the price of many wounds.

"Rene," said he, turning to him, "how could you forget so far your religious principles as to yield to a movement of anger? Had you consulted your heart, it would have said to you—pardon Rene. It would have reminded you of the duty of fraternal charity, the life and foundation of our faith. Heaven has no storms for the wicked—its goodness holds out mercy to them and pardons their wicked instincts."

We are all born guilty. Original sin wages continual war against our life. Vice destroys the harmony of nature. Oh! how happy men would be, did but brotherly love guide their footsteps through life. Society regenerated by this divine principle would number none but happy days. Mutual forgiveness of injuries would cement the bonds of peace. A continual song of joy and happiness would be heard upon earth, and upon Golgotha there would gleam forth a bright ray of divine charity which would light up the darkness of humanity.

VI.

This devoted interest that Flora manifested, was for Rene unmistakable evidence of her attachment to him. Henceforward he could rely on her affection for him. His heart swelled with pride. He possessed her entire soul. He had such need of consolation, and of a loving and devoted heart, into which he could pour out the effusion of his loving and sensitive soul.

His youthful days had been passed amidst political tempests, and he had experienced in the sunshine of his existence the most cruel and distressing trials. He had witnessed his family massacred during the Revolution and had joined, although scarcely passed his boyhood, the other gentlemen in the army of de Conde for the defense of the throne and the altar. Wounded at the siege of Thionville he was left for dead in a ditch, and after the loss of the unfortunate campaign of Princes, and the dissolution of their army, was enabled by extraordinary efforts to make his way to England. Here pursued by ennui he embarked in a few days to seek his fortune in the

New World. Up to this time some literary works from his own pen had already been published and he thought that amid the shades and vast solitudes of the American forests, and under the People's benignant rule he would be enabled to gather new and additional force for his imagination. The idea of seeing these scenes of nature, so brilliant and beautiful, attracted his entire attention.

It was, therefore, during his emigration to Florida that he had been ship-wrecked in the Bay of Norfolk. The debut was not fortunate, nor did it augur well for the future, but the most illusive dreams of happiness took possession of his heart, and to them he abandoned himself with all the ardor of his young soul.

Happiness! what is this magical word, this enchanting music, which makes the heart palpitate? Every body in the world follows it. Civilized man searches after it in the various pleasures of this mundane sphere. The Indian and the savage in their leafy huts dreams of the same ideal. I do not know who that bears a name in any language that does not consult his own happiness, whilst time undermines and destroys like a stroke of lightning this dazzling scaffolding of illusions.

All happiness is but a dream. Rene had also experienced this happiness. He was no longer alone. A nymph, Egerie, suddenly appeared in the sky of his destiny, and filled his poetic soul with inspiration. He had seen all his family go down to the grave. All that had been dear to him was no more. His country even was no more to him, and he gave himself up to his il-

lusions, everything was replaced, a cherished image filled up the void in his soul.

After the misty skies of his native country had been succeeded by that of the dazzling sun of Virginia, his blood ran fresh in his veins. Fresh ardor and courage took possession of his heart. A new experience, a new, pure and delightful horizon bordered his existence, and in the bounty of nature he saw the grandeur of the Supreme Being.

Norfolk was then only a very small town, and some fishermens' cabins might be seen dotting the beach here and there.

Impenetrable virgin forests stretched themselves out to the very edge of the sea. It was a little hamlet as it were nestling on the border of a magnificent bay which at a later period was to become one of the most important harbors of the Atlantic seaboard.

But this future was already destined to it from its origin—for Norfolk was a seaport long before Baltimore, Philadelphia, or even New York. Thus in their infancy we beheld the people of the Carthaginians, the Phenicians, and at a later period the Normans, impelled by the spirit of adventure, braving the fortune of the sea with that boldness and daring that characterize maritime genius.

The State of Virginia belonged formerly to the crown of Charles II., King of England, and Norfolk was divided into two counties—the counties of Norfolk and Princess Anne—the latter named after the Princess Anne, daughter of James II., when she ascended the throne of England. With the exception of some

houses scattered here and there along the bay, and occupied by old colonists, and some isolated plantations buried in the forests, Norfolk had, in fact, no other monuments than some churches, a little wooden chapel and a mission house occupied by Pere Souel, who had passed his life in the conversion of the savages. At this time Catholic missionaries were spread through all the countries of North America, sowing the seeds of civilization and teaching the precepts of a Christian life.

The port, or rather the bay, which later was called the port of Norfolk, was then rarely visited by ships of the larger size. Some small vessels went to Europe and bartered their own products for European merchandise.

Several persons in Norfolk had amassed quite a competence in this traffic. The maritime trade alone was the life of the city.

One of these vessels had just arrived in Norfolk and her captain was the father of Flora, who having for sometime been absent and engaged in this kind of business, had returned to spend the remainder of his days in the bosom of his family, and near his cherished daughter.

This sudden arrival surprised the young maiden in her relations with Rene. Living alone with her venerable grandmother, during the absence of her father, she was indulged in all the caprices of a spoiled yet cherished child.

The joy of seeing her father was, however, as real as it was unexpected. As a respectful and dutiful

daughter she only saw in her father a protector; a friend who thought only of making her life happy.

Two days had passed since the arrival of her father, during which time she had not seen Rene, nor had she dared to make known to her father her love and devotion to him.

Towards the evening of the last of these days the father wished to have a private interview with his daughter, and impart to her some projects which he had concerning her future happiness.

He had learned that during his absence his daughter had made the acquaintance of Rene. He felt uneasy about it because he had formed other plans for her. He had become acquainted during his voyages with a young sailor, and had taken the resolution of making him his son-in-law by marrying him to Flora.

This for his daughter would be what her relations would term a suitable marriage, one of those marriages that are commonly called marriages of reason and convenience.

It unites two beings in little sympathy with one another, and almost in every case the consequence is that the husband finishes up by dissolving the conjugal relationship, and giving himself up to various disorders; whilst the young woman wearied by a life of grief and chagrin with a person who has no empire either over her heart or sentiments, delivers herself up to the dangers of the world, and plunges recklessly into the wild torrent of pleasures, and thus a lovely and sweet nature, endowed with every virtue necessary to contribute to conjugal happiness, is transformed by a sad fatality into a monster of disorder and an object of public scandal.

VII.

Flora's father resolved to speak to his daughter concerning it.

"Flora," said he, taking her affectionately by the hand one evening, "You do not surely doubt my paternal feeling for you? I have, therefore, thought much of your future happiness."

A blush overspread the countenance of Flora.

He stopped short an instant as if hesitating, then continued: I have then thought of your happiness and of marrying you, my child.

Is it I, Father? replied Flora, greatly astonished; who is it then who demands my hand in marriage?

She fixed upon her father one of her penetrating and inquiring looks.

Did you then not see him yesterday? the young man who came along with me, who is called John.

Is it he, replied Flora? Never!

"Look here, my child, replied he, I know all. I know that during my absence you have made the acquaintance of a young stranger; but, my daughter, at

your age one never reflects. It is not the heart alone that is necessary to be consulted in regard to marriage.

I understand you, I think, said she in return. A father always undertakes to find a husband who he thinks will be suitable for his daughter, at least every father thinks in this way, but they are often sadly mistaken.

But as for me I think otherwise ; John does not suit my taste. No ! No ! and she pressed the hands of her father as the tears commenced to fall from her eyes, and she retired quickly in order to shut herself up in her own chamber.

This business is more serious than I apprehended, said the father ; but I have used only kind words to-day, I shall use my authority to-morrow.

The next morning at breakfast, John was seated convenient to Flora. He was an insignificant young man, without education, and consequently was in little harmony with Flora, who was of refined intelligence, developed by a finished education.

Flora's father partook of his breakfast as usual, as if nothing had passed between himself and daughter, and affected to make it appear as if he thought this marriage had been already concluded, and sometimes introduced into his conversation, phrases like the following : "When you will be married my children," &c., and at the end of the breakfast he hastily arose from the table saying, let us go, John. We must away and procure the license for your marriage.

Flora, in the meantime, remained perfectly calm, like

a resolute girl, and occupied herself as usual with her household duties.

When her father and her future husband had left, she ran into her own chamber. With her usual energy of character she had concealed her emotion, but when she found herself alone, her heart immediately yielded and tears and sobs followed in succession.

After a short time she rose up quickly as if she had taken a new resolution, and dressing herself promptly, she left the house; she ran to the church in which she remained prostrate for some instants, and then hastened towards the spot where she had been accustomed to find Rene.

He was seated beneath a tree dreamy and pensive. His eyes ever and anon scanning the horizon to discover some vessel that might perchance be bringing to him good tidings from his beloved France.

But if adversity still pursues him, if the revolutionary troubles of his country deprives him of his paternal possessions, is he not, after all, a man? Has not God endowed him with talents? He will then produce a work whose echo will sound his fame throughout the entire world. His pen will repair his broken fortunes. His work will be the product of his intellect. Such were the thoughts that rushed tumultuously through his feverish and agitated brain. Strange deception of the human heart! gilded illusion! fatal precursor of a more fatal reality!

Man hopes on, hopes ever, even on the very brink of the abyss.

The flowers strewed along his pathway conceal the

enemy that lurks behind the ambush. He abandons himself to the joy of hope. He opens his heart to gladness whilst adversity is on the watch to change his mirth into sorrow, his happiness into misery, and at the very moment the heavens are the most unclouded, the sky the brightest, the most serene and smiling, he will behold a dark and sombre cloud of adversity lifting itself above the horizon.

So did Rene indulge himself in his fond chimera of felicity at the very moment a terrible thunderbolt was preparing to burst upon his head.

He had not seen Flora for three days past, and was only happy when he met her, and would have wished her to be always near to him.

As soon as she appeared to him he immediately arose and ran towards her, and when he came close he suddenly stopped.

She appeared to be so much changed during the two days past; pale and haggard, with the eyes red and bloodshot.

Tell me, I pray you, what is the matter? he said to her.

Nothing, replied Flora; but that my father has arrived!

Oh! then replied Rene, it ought to be a day of happiness for you.

No! No! Rene, said she, (it was the first time that she had called him by name); No! we are lost! My father wishes to marry me to another! and the tears commenced to run down her cheeks.

Rene stepped back a pace, and at the same moment

the father of Flora appeared at the corner of the street.

I will withdraw then, said Rene. Have courage. God is good and all powerful, and it may be that your father will change his determination. But never under any circumstances forget this precept of the Most High—"Honor thy father and thy mother."

Yes, answered she, with a sad and thoughtful air. Then suddenly raising her head as if under a strong and feverish excitement, she added, Yes, yes, but God wills what woman wills.

She cast on Rene one of those penetrating glances, like the lightning flash that announces the thunder-bolt. Her eyes sparkled, and her firmly compressed lips gave evidence of a bold and determined purpose.

Rene's cheeks blanched with terror. He had caught a momentary glimpse of the terrible abyss. The heart of a woman makes no compromise. Following its impulses she braves the greatest perils, triumphs over difficulties the most extreme.

That heart has never yet been fathomed. It will continue a mystery until the end of time.

Rene then withdrew, and Flora went to meet her father. He did not reproach her, however, and they walked home in silence.

The Father of Flora was what is commonly called a brave man. Devoted since his earliest manhood to the profession of a sailor, he had experienced more gales of wind than he had read books.

He was, therefore, perfectly indifferent to everything that passed outside of his own ordinary routine, which

was regulated like the chronometer on ship-board, provided that his four meals were served at the appointed hour, and that he had during the evening some old sea dogs, like himself, with whom to converse on the affairs of the ocean, otherwise he cared but little whether the earth revolved or stood still.

Although he had not been fondled when a child upon the knees of a duchess, repeating in his ears the old adage of the French nobility, "*Dieu, ma Dame, et mon Roi*," he had, nevertheless, a noble heart, and enjoyed at home much of the public respect and esteem.

He had now become old and was preparing for his declining days, and had, therefore*, come home with a son-in-law in his pocket for his daughter, as it were an Indian Cashmere shawl. He had neither sought after nor chosen this son-in-law, but had found him by chance already made to hand, sailor to sailor.

In the evening they chatted together of larboard and starboard, &c.

The daughter occupied herself with the cares of the household, and in the meanwhile was happy.

Her father had arranged in advance his plans for the future.

As to Rene, he had nothing to say against him ; he only knew that he was the descendant of an illustrious family, whom the terrors of the Revolution had caused to emigrate. As to the talents which he possessed and which his daughter had spoken to him of, he scarcely understood what the thing meant. His education had not developed itself to that point.

VIII.

In the meantime Rene entered his house. Shutting the door and windows of his chamber, he threw himself into the arm chair before the table upon which he was in the habit of writing, and placed his head between his two hands. He was overwhelmed and completely prostrated, and retained an immovable posture for more than an hour.

It would be impossible to describe the feelings that passed through his mind, so crushing and terrible was the blow. He then arose and commenced to walk about, anguish depicted on his countenance, his brow placid and contracted by turns, his black eye brows drawn closely together, his head rolling from side to side like a man in intoxication, his limbs trembling, his teeth chattering, and these words alone escaping his lips :

May she be as happy as my grief will be eternal.

The very essence of the philosophy of christianity was contained in these simple words brought forth under the despair of Rene. The skeptic would have

breathed forth his grief with curses and anger, and suicide is often his only means of escape from the ills of life.

The Christian soul rises above the misfortunes of this terrestrial life. It elevates itself to the heavens. The Eternal God will be its succor, its consolation : incomprehensible sublimity, holy faith, the balm which calms every troubled or wounded heart.

God says unto it, "Resignation!"

It obeys ; it hopes.

Three days and three nights he passed without sleep and without partaking of nourishment of any kind, whilst he remained in this state of mental torture. Sometimes walking, sometimes sitting, the tears in the meantime coursing down his cheeks, but not an exclamation, nor a word of any kind escaped from his lips.

McNamara had become impatient to see Rene, not having heard ought of him for sometime. He hurried to his place of residence and rapped at the door.

Rene opened the door and immediately threw himself into his arms. Rene could only articulate a few words. My friend—the thunderbolt!—the thunderbolt has fallen upon me!

In the meantime Flora had returned to her home with her father. He did not speak to her during the evening.

Calm and perfectly master of himself, he did not even seem to doubt of his daughter's obedience. He was one of those haughty men whose character never yields. He had pronounced judgment, and his will required it to be executed.

The same evening he gave a grand ball, where all the elegance of Norfolk was invited. Flora made her appearance, more brilliant and more dazzling with freshness and with youth than ever.

It was remarked, however, that her physiognomy had an appearance more severe than usual. From time to time she was seen raising her eyes towards heaven, as if some serious thought was crossing her mind. She seemed even indifferent to the exciting ball, to her splendid attire, to the bright lustres, to the garland of flowers decorating the cornices, to the harmonies of the music resounding through the hall.

At day break the doors were closed. The company had retired.

Flora entered her apartment, placed herself before the mirror, throwing a last look on her charming toilet, then glancing at the flowers in the wreath which adorned her head, removed the diamonds, the charms, the laces, and all her finery ; she dressed herself in a simple black dress.

She afterwards opened her window and contemplated with melancholy manner the splendid sky in its majestic serenity.

The pure and fresh morning air, perfumed with the odor of magnolias, exhaled gushes of delicious and exhilarating sweetness. It calmed her heated head, like the celestial dew, which extinguishes every night in the lilies and the daisies the burning vapors of the day.

She then sat down to her table and wrote a letter to Rene.

The clock striking five she arose, and after sealing the letter, which she placed in her secretary, she put on a black hat and a black veil and furtively went out.

It was scarcely daylight. The street lamps yet gave their dim light. The streets were nearly deserted, some few travellers and some workmen going to their daily labor, walking hurriedly, and along the sidewalks was seen the dark shadow of a graceful and fairy-like form, passing amongst them and going towards the mission chapel.

Flora was going to confide herself to her God.

After the mass she returned home, and called her old servant in her room.

Jennie, said she to her, I will ask you a last favor.

Jennie looked up with eager eyes.

Flora was pale as death, her hands trembling.

I do not know, my dear Jennie, what is going to happen to me, but promise me on your word to deliver personally this letter to Rene. You will find it in my secretary; here is the key.

Jennie, who had been a witness to all the griefs and trials of her pure mistress, took the key and went out of the room sobbing.

Flora had a friend who resided in Portsmouth. She was named Mariette. Everything in nature has its affinity. Everything tends to union and harmony in the same manner as unlikes constantly repel.

The dove does not mate with the vulture—the butterfly with the hornet—the good and sensible being with the wicked, cruel and egotistic.

Mariette was endowed with a privileged nature.

From seeing those two friends constantly together popular favor had conferred on Mariette, as it had done for Flora, the characteristic name of Lily of Portsmouth, a name quite in harmony with her blonde hair and her delicate complexion that rivalled the lily and the rose.

Generous and candid soul, imbued with a holy faith, she had met Flora in the world, and like two sensitive flowers bent by the wind they inclined towards one another under the charm of a sweet friendship.

The heart has its instincts that never deceive—as the magnet attracts the iron—so do two souls feel themselves drawn by a natural attraction; the same inclination guides them, unites them and cements that alliance or bond of friendship which nothing can dissolve. A mutual exchange of the purest love and devotion animates their souls. Friendship has been known to endure all the trials of life, and brave the greatest perils rather than sever that chain of sentiments uniting two hearts.

As Norfolk and Portsmouth are twin sisters, separated only by a sheet of limpid water, Flora and Mariette lived together in close intimacy. Their joys and their griefs were common to both. Their maiden dreams were the same, and each one was about to enter into life with her affianced.

But the heart has its mysterious folds—and in a moment it can stray—and vacillate under the influence of human weakness.

Flora had chosen her affianced. Her heart had spoken, her reason had approved, and her decision was irrevocable. She had confided her life to Rene.

She was his forever. She had nothing more to de-

sire ; all her sentiments of affection, all her desires of happiness were at their height.

Mariette in her choice had experienced a transient attraction, a momentary affection, rather than a resolution matured by reflection.

It happened, therefore, that her heart, one day, experienced a feeling for another ; her first dream was not complete. Trouble glided into her soul, then indecision surprised and threatened her. Her mind, in her perplexity, was a prey to cruel doubts of her affection, and she asked herself this terrible question, Which one ought she love ? Which one should open her pathway to happiness in this life ?

Thus, by a strange contradiction in human things, Flora was struggling in despair against the tempest that sought to separate her from her betrothed, whilst Mariette, experiencing a new sentiment, was struggling to disengage herself from her first vow.

For both it was a misfortune. Grief with all its bitterness, with all its terrible weight of moral suffering awaited them.

Flora received, at this moment, from Mariette, the following letter :

DEAR FLORA :

Night on its every return tells me that you are happy ! One sole dream sweetens your slumbers. One sole thought lulls you into a gentle sleep. It is he—it is Rene—it is he alone !

Ah ! how my heart envies your happiness ! What a calm, what a serenity in your soul ! What trouble and consternation in mine ! Anguish racks and tears my soul with all the horrors of death. What a strange feeling tortures my life.

I, also, was happy once like you. Every day contributed its share of happiness. Every echo repeated to me those words expressed

with all the burning ardor of my soul, "I love him." Like you I was affianced, when suddenly with the rapidity of a lightning-flash, the storm burst upon me, and darkness impenetrable now surrounds me; shall I tell you? Ought I make the confession? No, never would I have the courage: my heart is troubled for another. Two horizons present themselves before me. My life is divided. No longer do I know which is my affianced; a burning indecision besieges me at every moment and envelops me in its fatal cloud. Can the heart thus change its idols and transfer its affections to another object? Oh! vanity of the world, how truly are you real! The sand is not more uncertain and shifting than our affections. This deceitful flame that consumes our youth, is as suddenly enkindled and extinguished like those forked fires that plough the darkness of a stormy night—like those waves that dash against the shore, expiring one after the other, and dying together on the same rock which rises up like a tomb-stone over their nothingness.

How delusive and transient are our impressions! We bend like the rosebush to every wind; our emotions are ever dissolving chimeras; cloud-like dreams wafted along by the tempest, bright and dazzling illusions tinted by the rainbow, which the showers of spring-time painted in the heavens.

No, Flora, we should not extend our affections to others. Once the heart has chosen, we should remain faithful to its vow. We should close up the wound for ever.

Let us retain our betrothed, and not allow ourselves to be carried away by the currents of the world. Let us open our hearts to God. Prayer will restore to us calm and tranquility. Duty imposes silence on our inordinate affections.

The bird chooses its mate and remains ever faithful. Every spring brings back the same flowers in the valley. Echo repeats the same sound. Shall, then, the human heart alone be inconstant and unfaithful?

Oh! let faith save us, in the shadow of the altar let us ask of God the grace of sustaining our weakness, and to look down with pity on his humble creature prostrated at his feet. May the solemn constancy of God descend upon us from above!

Let us pray, my dear friend; prayer gives courage and sustains our souls amid the dangers of life. The soul that bows down before the altar can never perish—like a brazen monument it will stand erect and uninjured amid all the storms of life.

Receive my love,

MARIETTE.

Flora had just finished reading this letter when Mariette entered the room.

The two friends clasped each other in a mutual embrace of love.

A deep silence kept them for a moment in suspense. They understood one another perfectly, but their emotion was so great as to prevent them from giving utterance to their feelings.

“Dear Flora,” said Mariette, at last breaking the silence, “I have severed, broken all ties. I shall henceforth remain faithful to my betrothed. I am no longer suffering from a fever of delirium.” Behold! exclaimed she, exhibiting to her the quiet and regular pulsations of her wrist.

Flora remained silent and pensive.

“Since I have been rescued now from danger I must think of you.”

“Have you seen Rene?”

Flora continued to remain silent and immovable.

“Speak, my dear friend,” I entreat you; “speak,” implored Mariette, “your silence alarms me. You have no longer any confidence in me. Am I then no longer your best friend? Let us see,” and she threw herself upon her neck and embraced her with an effusion of tears.

“I place my destiny in the hands of God,” answered Flora. “I must resign myself to his will.”

“But does your father wish to sacrifice you to his caprice or rather to his want of judgment? and have you told Rene?”

“No,” replied Flora; “if he knew all would he not go in his despair and seek vengeance on John? Could I permit him to expose his life for me? and has he not

promised Father Souel to renounce duelling forever?"

"Well," answered Mariette, "it is I then who will save you. I shall see Rene and tell him to present himself before your father."

No, Mariette, that would only serve to irritate my father. You do not know him. He believes that the winds ought to obey him when he gives a command. But do not be uneasy. With the help of God I have taken my resolution—I shall never be the wife of John—no, never!

Well, I am going to inform Rene of it. We must console him, and restore hope to his heart. I shall go immediately.

"Wait," exclaimed Flora.

"No—no—immediately—at once I shall go"—and she departed hastily.

Flora then threw herself upon a sofa, repeating softly to herself: Oh! friendship! thy devotedness is, indeed, incomprehensible!

IX.

Mariette was hastening away.

As calm and tranquil and as perfectly mistress of herself as Flora was, so enthusiastic and excitable was Mariette. They were like fire and water, the gentle zephyr and the gale, the calm and the tempest.

Flora yielded to reflection. Mariette allowed herself to be carried away by impressions. The heart spoke in the one and was silent in the other.

Different in nature and disposition, they resembled in one thing—for the sensibility and goodness of heart were alike and equal in both. It was only the expression of their sentiments that constituted the difference between them, and the one did not excel the other in sweetness and goodness of disposition.

Yes, answered Mariette, hastening on with a rapid step and speaking to herself. Yes, I must save them.

Her countenance was flushed, her arms wildly agitated, and she elbowed and jostled the passers-by and her friends whom she met with in her way.

What has happened to Mariette this morning? was

asked by every one who observed her hurried and excited manner. What has befallen her? Has her betrothed been taken from her?

But Mariette continued on, hearing nothing, troubling herself with nothing. She went straight to her destination—to Rene.

At the corner of a street she stood suddenly still. She perceived McNamara.

She ran towards him. Come with me, she said to him hurriedly.

Whither?

Follow me

But whither?

It is no matter; come, I wish it.

McNamara followed her.

She halted at Rene's door.

Rap, she said, I wish to see him immediately.

But he is very ill.

No matter, I wish to console him; I come from Flora.

Heavens! you have? exclaimed Rene, on opening the door.

Yes, said she, it is I, and with a witness.

What do you wish of me?

She entered and deposited her shawl upon the sofa.

Rene's two pistols were lying upon the table.

Are they loaded? enquired she.

Perfectly.

She took up one of them and aimed it at Rene's breast.

Rene smiled.

No, do not laugh, said she, it is very serious I assure you.

Fire ! then, said Rene.

Be it so, then. You give up your life to the first one that demands it of you. The indifference of a gentleman.

When it is a woman that demands it, answered Rene.

Swear now to obey me.

I cannot.

What, do you refuse ?

No ; but what do you demand of me ?

You have this minute given me your life—give me now your word.

If what you ask is possible.

It is possible.

Then I consent, said Rene.

Come with me to Flora's father.

Why ?

I will tell you at another time.

You wish me then to surrender with my eyes closed ?

Well, then, you do not love Flora !

Rene retreated a step and placed his hand upon his heart.

No, no, continued she, you do not love her. Oh, men ! men ! trust yourself to them ! love them ! they are pleasing and amiable and agreeable as the dew ; but when danger comes, when it is necessary to give the least proof of their attachment and devotedness, you will not find them ; they vanish behind the curtain.

Rene grew pale on hearing her severe reproaches, his fingers ran through his hair, his breast heaved under the pressure of a difficult and painful breathing.

No, no, resumed she, men have no courage, no energy. The least obstacle daunts them, the least difficulty discourages them. They are incapable of making the least effort to save themselves. It is only in woman that strength and decision of character, and action particularly, are to be found when the critical and decisive moment arrives.

No, no ! you do not love Flora. Were I in your place I would not remain shut up in the house when fire has broken out and there is need to hasten to the scene of danger. I would go and see her father. I would explain to him my engagement with his daughter, and I would say to him, Give her to me in marriage or I shall set fire to Norfolk and burn the whole United States.

Rene continued silent.

What, added she, must I return to Flora and tell her that Rene loves her no longer ?

My dear friend, answered Rene, your friendship for Flora prevents you from appreciating my sentiments towards her ; she is my life, my future, my only riches on the earth, all that is dearest to me in the world. You know, or rather Flora knows, that I am ready to sacrifice myself for her. My heart would not hesitate at any price. God is my witness.

But you have no experience in the world ; such a step hastily taken might compromise Flora's fate and mine.

Moreover ought I not consult her? Bring me an order from her and I shall obey. I am unwilling to take this step without her consent.

That is the way, replied she; placing on the table the pistol she had been holding in her hand whilst disputing with him. It is always to-morrow with you, and to-morrow will be too late.

You refuse then, Rene, to go with me to Flora's father.

No, answered Rene, but I await an order from Flora.

Very well, she answered, I shall hasten to her and bring you the order; and she left him precipitately, murmuring to herself—O, the men! the men! they are the death of us. Let them dare now to accuse mother Eve.

Rene and McNamara stood amazed at this bold remonstrance of the young maiden.

When Mariette was in the street she began to reflect more calmly and dispassionately. She was saying in an audible tone, Flora herself was opposed to Rene's speaking to her father; perhaps both are right. But no matter, I must save them. She crossed the river and betook herself to her own house.

Whilst Mariette was devising means to save her friend, events with their rapid, implacable and terrible logic hastened on and decided the fate of the unfortunate Flora.

Poor Flora!

X.

The wedding preparations were therefore made as if no obstacle were in the way.

The license was obtained, the day was fixed upon—the evening of the next day at 6 o'clock for the marriage ceremony.

Flora attended, as if she were a stranger, to all the preparations.

Like a condemned victim she submitted silently to her fate and accepted the sacrifice. Supplications, prayers would have been of no avail, for she knew her father could not be subdued.

The time to go to church having arrived, she suffered herself to be attired, as the culprit submits to the last toilet of the executioner.

Flora's father was determined to give to his daughter's wedding a great splendor and *eclat*.

All his acquaintances and friends were invited, and carriages and vehicles obstructed the street.

When the unfortunate girl appeared in her white gauze dress, a long veil and the crown of orange flowers

adorning her alabaster forehead and head, there arose a shout of admiration among the crowd which had collected to enjoy the splendid ceremony.

Never did she appear so handsome. The waxy palleness of her face, her fixed and calm look, her slim and delicate figure. Everything gave her an imposing and majestic air.

She came forward with a resolute step and entered her carriage.

The cortege was soon in church where Father Souel was waiting for them at the altar.

Flora stood unmoved before him, and fixed her eyes upon a statue of Christ.

The ceremony soon commenced, when Father Souel, looking to her, said :

Do you accept for your husband, Mr. John——.

She hesitated a moment, then raising her eyes towards heaven, she replied with a firm voice :

No ! father, my heart does not consent to it. A great tumult arose within the temple, a loud cry was heard from her father who being under great excitement fell, prostrated from an attack of illness. He was carried to his home, where Flora herself was conveyed, very much agitated.

Her father soon regained his senses ; but he could scarcely realize the incidents of the past. His daughter's conduct at the altar seemed to him like a dream or nightmare. John kept near him, silent and dumbfounded. All at once he rose as if a sudden thought had struck him.

Monsieur, said he, nothing is lost ; be, therefore con-

soled. I ask of you a moment's conversation with your daughter and all will be satisfactorily arranged.

One finds sometimes in those gross and ignorant natures, as in the Indians, low cunnings and serpent-like instincts, which do not shrink from any stratagem however mean and dishonorable. John had just conceived an infernal plot to deceive the young girl.

Flora who was consulted, consented to receive him, hoping that a frank explanation would induce him to renounce the further prosecution of the marriage, and would thus satisfy her father in obtaining her pardon.

John was immediately introduced.

Mademoiselle, said he, advancing respectfully towards her, I have a favor to ask of you, after the gross insult offered me at the altar

Speak, Sir, answered Flora

An insult always requires some reparation, continued John. You deceived me in coming so far as the altar, with the sole purpose of insulting me publicly.

No, Sir ! replied Flora indignantly ; you knew perfectly well that I did not consent to this marriage, and you were coward enough to be willing to wed a young girl who was forced to the sacrifice ; but in doing so you would have had for ever my contempt. But do you not know that man proposes, and woman disposes ?

But, pray, let us close the interview. What do you want of me now ?

What I want, Mademoiselle ; I have just told you I want a reparation. Consent to renew the marriage ceremony, and when I shall be asked, in my turn, if I consent to accept you as my wife, I shall answer, No !

The insult offered to me will thus be cancelled; my dignity and my honor will be satisfied, and your father will have no more reproaches to make you.

I consent to it, replied Flora; give, immediately, the orders, and I am ready to return to the church.

John returned to Flora's father.

"All is arranged," he said, "but Flora must have no time for reflection. The marriage ceremony must take place immediately."

In a moment the horses were harnessed to the carriage and the party started in the direction of the church, where Father Souel, who had been notified again, was awaiting them.

Over this assembly that had thus found itself united, there rested a silence that can not well be expressed, and that seemed occasioned by a feeling of something strange and calamitous impending. The sudden renewal of Flora's determination was incomprehensible.

"My child," said the venerable missionary, addressing her with a trembling voice which betrayed the most lively emotion, and in his trouble and excitement inadvertently directing the question first to her,

"Do you take Mr. John for your lawful husband?"

Yes! No! Yes! father, she answered, in a faint and irresolute tone.

And you, Mr. John, do you take Miss Flora for your lawful wife?

"I do," answered the miserable John, in a tone of lively emphasis.

At that moment a fearful cry was heard from the lips of Flora. "The miscreant has deceived me," she ex-

claimed, swooning away and becoming a prey to a violent attack of nervous excitement.

John remained unmoved ; "convey her immediately to the house," he said with a calm and impassable voice, "this emotion will be only transient."

They carried her to the carriage, when John seated himself at her side, and the horses started off in a galop.

At a short distance, a noisy band of musicians was crossing the street. On hearing the noises of the trumpets and clarions the horses became unmanageable ; they broke away with the rapidity of lightning ; the wheels struck from the stones of the pavement a shower of sparks ; the carriage rolled and bounded in a most alarming manner ; the horses were no longer under restraint ; their driver was thrown upon the pavement ; thus did they arrive to the end of Main street, directing their maddened course towards the sea, and in the twinkling of an eye, carriage and horses were precipitated into the water with a fearful crash.

Numbers immediately hastened after the carriage ; and the crowd continued to increase, terror-stricken by the dread disaster.

At this time there were seated on the bank, at a short distance from the scene of the calamity, two young men. One was resting his head upon the shoulder of his comrade, as if he had difficulty in supporting it.

They were both mute and silent. The rising tide was driven by a violent wind. The sea rumbled mournfully.

On hearing the crash of the carriage and beholding the gathering crowd, they arose hastily and anticipating

some terrible accident, they hurried to the place of the disaster.

Those two young men were McNamara and Rene whom his friend had accompanied to the beach in order that he might enjoy the air, and cool his fevered brow with the sea-breeze.

They learned that a carriage had been precipitated into the water, with two ill-fated occupants.

Hearkening only to their courage, they stripped off some of their garments and plunged into the sea in order to rescue from death those two unfortunate ones.

Ten minutes were passed in a cruel anxiety. The crowd awaited in anguish their reappearance. Finally they were seen emerging from the waves, faint and exhausted. Their efforts had been all in vain. They were unable to discover the bodies.

Rene, who had been weakened, especially by the three days of anxiety, seated himself upon the beach in order to regain his breath, remained silent for a moment, and then summoning all his courage, exclaimed, "come, my friend, let us make a last effort to rescue those unfortunate ones from death," and plunging in once more they disappeared beneath the waves. After the lapse of five minutes McNamara reappeared, having found the body of John buried beneath the carriage. He made every effort to withdraw him, but seeing his efforts useless, he sought the beach once more to rest himself.

Rene had not yet made his appearance; it was a moment of awful silence. If, in consequence of his weakness he has been drawn out by the tide, the poor young man will perish a victim to his devotedness.

McNamara was preparing to go to his assistance, when cries were heard from the crowd. Rene could, with difficulty, keep his head above the surface of the water; his right hand held a form, around which white draperies floated; he was swimming with the other hand; he was assisted in regaining the shore, and the body of the young woman was taken, immediately, out of the water.

The veil being removed from her countenance, which was impressed with a heavenly serenity, Rene recognized Flora, and observing on her finger the ring which she had offered him as a pledge of their espousals, he swooned away upon the ground.

XI.

McNamara had Rene, who was still unconscious, transported to his own house, whilst loving and sympathizing friends carried the inanimate form of Flora to her father's.

But the poor child was no longer of this world. Asphyxia was complete. All efforts at restoration were useless. Death ! cruel death ! had borne her away in his arms, and the lovely sky of Virginia wept for one star less in its bright firmament.

She had said that she would never be the wife of John ! There are instincts of the heart, providential and seemingly heaven-sent presentiments, which remove partly the veil that conceals our future destiny, and in resisting them we not unfrequently draw down upon ourselves the direst calamities.

She had taken her flight towards the heavenly abode, and appeared before her God as pure as the prayer that her lips had so frequently uttered, and still she was the affianced of Rene. The Eternal had mercifully taken her to Himself by death, lest she might prove recreant to her heart.

John descended to hell to expiate his base treachery.

The next day two coffins were borne to the cemetery—that of John, whose body they succeeded in rescuing from the waters, and that of the unfortunate Flora.

This sad event filled the inhabitants of Norfolk with consternation. They followed the remains of Flora to their last resting place. The mourning was universal. Many persons fell sick, terrified by this sudden and terrible visitation of death.

Flora's father survived his daughter but a short time. His last days were passed in a state of fatuity and childishness. Frequently he would arise with a sudden start as if he were a prey to a feverish excitement, and exclaim with all the bitterness of despair—“Curses on me! I have killed my child!”

Another coffin was soon to join the two others. It was of one who had died of despair. The aged grandmother, crushed beneath the weight of her grief, went to repose by the side of her dear Flora.

The whole family was extinct.

As regards Mariette, it would be useless to depict her grief and despair. The poor child could receive no consolation. She had lost the companion of her youth, of her days of brightest hope. Life was nothing now to her. She would renounce it and her betrothed.

One morning she was seen to leave her house at day-break. She entered a carriage that took the boat to Baltimore.

There, she knocked at the door of a dark and sombre edifice; it was the convent of the Ladies of Providence. She received the veil of the religious, passed her life

in prayer and good works, and died, whilst still young, leaving behind her the memory of her charities, instead of the fleeting memory of the vanities of a worldly life which she could have entered.

The two friends were again united in the heavenly abode—in that bright region which is the last meeting place of all beings who have passed their life on earth in innocence and purity, and in the practice of good works.

Rene remained for a long time unconscious. His life was despaired of. A burning fever threatened to terminate his existence. From time to time he would hold his hands before his face as if to shut out from view a painful vision. In this manner did he remain for three weeks hovering between life and death.

McNamara never left him for a moment. Father Souel visited him several times a day in order to impart to his young friend the consolations of religion. But Rene was incapable of recognizing any one.

One morning, in fine, the fever abated. He regained the use of his senses, his hand clutched convulsively that of his friend McNamara, and torrents of tears flowed down his cheeks.

On hearing these good tidings, Father Souel made all haste to visit him. "My son," said the venerable old man to him, "God brings you back to life. Offer your life, Rene, as a sacrifice to the Eternal; life is of such little worth; it is a cross that we must all carry. Murmur not against Divine Providence—its designs are often inscrutable to mortals. God wished to test your Christian faith, and to make your resignation correspond to the grief that overwhelms you.

You are yet in the bloom and vigor of manhood. Heaven has its views in your regard, and if you have been endowed with talents it was that you might accomplish your mission in this world. Your country will call upon you some day and you will render a signal service to society."

Rene was a long time bending under the weight of an excessive grief, a prey to an internal fire that burned his very soul and consumed him by day and night.

Delirium, unceasing and unpitying, had seized possession of his brain.

At times he would appear gloomy and dejected, then his countenance would suddenly be lighted up by a smile at an image floating in the transparent air, evoking his soul and inviting him to the bright rays of light where she was wandering a radiant vapor among the elect of the faith.

Then when he would cast his eyes to the ground the nightmare would return to him in all its hideousness of form. Vacuity everywhere, everywhere grief and mourning, eternal silence and endless despair.

Haggard, feverish, he wished to avoid that night of gloom that enveloped his horizon. He sought to tear asunder that dark veil and he fell crushed, annihilated, stricken down like a demon.

He drew his phantom after him.

How could he escape from those frightful tortures of the heart; from the constant vision of this loved spectre, living side by side with his soul, always walking with him as a companion, trembling, wandering and gazing at him from beneath its white death shroud.

Time aided him. He quaffed drop by drop the burning waters of his agony. Time destroys all things, even time itself ceases to exist.

Rene by degrees regained his strength. He wished to go and pray at the tomb of Flora.

Leaning on the arm of the venerable missionary and on that of McNamara, he proceeded to the cemetery one morning at break of day.

The horizon was fringed and embroidered with the tinted gleams of the aurora; the atmosphere was serene; the air was redolent with the balmy odor of the flowers; the beautiful sky of Virginia was spread out in all its splendor and magnificence.

Rene whilst walking along plucked some white marguerites, and having arrived at the tomb of Flora, he laid them on the marble slab and sank prostrate to the earth.

Returning to himself he offered up his prayer, and supported by his two friends, drew from his pocket a pencil with which he inscribed on the tomb these four lines of the poet Malesherbes, his relative:

In this world she lived; where oft the best
Too soon we see decay:
As a flower she lived as flowers live
The brief space of a day.

Silent and pensive they retired from the sombre dwelling place of Flora, abandoned to solitude under the shade of a weeping willow, whose green branches rustling in the zephyrs murmured their plaintive elegy.

On their return they went to rest for a moment on the sea-beach near the spot where she had perished.

For a long time the inhabitants of Norfolk made pilgrimages to this place, which in their popular language was named "the Bay of the Pearl."

Strange reports began to be circulated concerning this ill-fated beach. On beautiful moonlit evenings, it was said, a pure and celestial voice was heard, whose accents filled the soul with rapturous transport. A white apparition was seen at times skimming the surface of the waters, and in moments of storm and tempest, warning cries would be heard by the mariners.

Since that time the whole face of the beach bordering the bay has been changed. Wharves and docks have been built, and the bustle and life of commerce and industry have replaced the solitude of those places.

Nothing was more picturesque and poetic than the bay of Norfolk. On the sandy beach the American creeper entwining and twisting itself in its serpentine coils, attached its green and denticulated foliage to the white surface of the sand. Far and near clusters of purple flowers with their long cylindrical cups, slightly tinged with yellow at their base, decorated this sea-green surface, which was still further diversified by the streaked prickly cactus with its yellow tinted flowers.

At stated times the canals surrounding the city were filled with the limpid waters of the bay ebbing and flowing like a cincture of crystal around the dwellings. Norfolk seemed like an enchanted Venice of Aleyons.

The American creeper has since disappeared, like the famous Lotus of the Nile, represented on all the ancient Egyptian monuments, and which covered all the approaches to Cairo, but which is now but rarely

met with except in upper Egypt near the Cataracts. The plants seem to take flight at the approach of civilization which alarms them.

The Bay of the Pearl no longer exists even in the memory of the inhabitants.

All the houses that were built at that period have entirely disappeared.

In 1776 Norfolk was taken and burned by the English. All the houses were constructed of wood. The church on Church street escaped the general conflagration and remained standing amid the ruins. To this day a cannon ball, which struck the church during the bombardment, and remained imbedded in the wall, can be seen by the passer-by.

In 1812 the English made a descent upon Hampton—a column of six hundred men advanced upon the city—placing in their front rank the crew of a French vessel which they had captured. France was also engaged in war with England at this time, but no sooner were the French within sight of the Americans than they turned suddenly upon the English, fired a volley into them and hastened to join the side of the Americans.

XII.

Rene, by degrees, resumed his former habits.

One evening, on returning from one of his excursions, Flora's old servant suddenly appeared before him.

The sight of Rene was a terrible shock to her. The remembrance of her mistress was renewed, accompanied with the most bitter poignancy. She had seen them so happy together—so gay, so smiling, and now she sees Rene alone, sad and melancholy—Rene was now the mere shadow of his former self.

She could not suppress her emotions. A torrent of tears rolled down her cheeks. Sobs stifled her voice and prevented her from uttering a single word. She covered her face with her shawl and handed to Rene a letter which she had promised Flora to deliver to him, and which was enveloped in a black lace handkerchief, formerly belonging to her mistress. Then she hastily departed.

Rene, trembling and agitated, read the following letter :

RENE :

A sad presentiment warns me that this is the last time that I shall ever write to you. My pen drops from my hand, for this thought overpowers me, and plunges my soul into the darkness of desolation, which the hope of the future feebly illumines by a single ray, as a solitary star twinkling through the clouds that sweep over the darkened heavens, strives to penetrate with its radiant smile the dense foliage of the trees.

Oh ! how happy was I not, when every returning morn I said to the swallow that nestled at my window, go bring me tidings of my beloved !

But now my swallow has fled away, and an ill-omened raven alarms me by its doleful and portentous cries. I, poor child, weep and tremble.

The dawning morn is redolent with the balmy odors of flowers, but the burning heat of the noonday's sun wakes up the tempest which lays all beautiful nature waste, and reaps our harvests before the time.

Love never again. Rene : the cup though sweet and fragrant, is deadly poison. All is mortal here below. Everything on earth hastens to pass away. Lay your heart before the Throne of the Eternal, there the fire of divine love will never be extinguished.

Therefore do I invoke Him every day. His name is the sweet burden of my prayers, and it is He whom my soul has ever before its eyes. But no more do sweet and pleasant dreams visit me in my slumbers—my night is eternal, like death itself.

The other night—I was not asleep, nor did a dream illude my fantasy, when, suddenly my mother stood before me, weeping, she clasped me in her arms, then casting on me a loving smile, she sought to draw me after her.

Think you not, Rene, that this was a premonition from Heaven ? Who has passed through life without beholding some loved one from the other world, who startles you by the sudden apparition of his wandering shade ?

Who, after these visions from beyond the tomb, can doubt the existence of a celestial life that awaits us? There is another life Rene. I go to my mother!

You remember when on the shore of the Atlantic we were conversing of a future life, and pointing to the Heavens, you spoke to me of those loved and cherished beings that had left you for the dwellings of eternity. Your hope of rejoining them one day was the only solace in your grief. These gloomy reflections are again awakened in my soul to day, when all joy has cruelly and forever departed from it.

I will not depict to you the feelings of my crushed and broken heart. Why should I distress you? Am I not the cause of all your suffering? This terrible thought alarms my soul.

I was your sole happiness on earth you said. Alas, happiness! Oh, delusion! Oh, fleeting mirage! gilded like a dream. Life and death were mocking one another. The flowers you gathered for me faded prematurely in my hands —a sad and ill-boding omen.

You said that I was your happiness. See Rene all happiness is only illusion—my dream is over.

Rene, I have not the strength to say to you *Adieu*. Yet my resolution is unalterable. Whatever may be the fate that Heaven reserves for me, welcome the will of Heaven.

Yes, yes, we shall meet again, either on this earth, clouded by sin and sorrow, or in the infinite azure of peace. Are not our souls twin-sisters? They soar together in the bright ethereal region of thought. Echo is our messenger, who repeats to me even your accents of despair in the sighing of the plaintive zephyrs.

Would that I could console you! but I am like the desert winds, whose breath is burning and consuming. I cannot even bid you hope.

Hope is the last ray of the human heart. Examine yours and you will there find this last reflection--this consoling ray, which will say to you, Hope! Though my grief and presentiment say to you, *Adieu*! for, I fear, I know not why, some

impending calamity. But we are betrothed. I shall remain faithful to my vow, and carry it even to my grave. In the sight of God I am your wife. Adieu, Rene.

FLORA.

This letter renewed the bleeding wounds of his heart; he folded it up again in the black lace, placed it next his heart and returned home, dragging himself along with difficulty by means of the little strength which was still left him. Then a renewed attack of his fever prostrated him for several days.

XIII.

Rene regained his strength but slowly, after this second grievous affliction. For a long time he might be seen walking alone the streets of Norfolk with a sad and melanchly air, and with a slow and unsteady step. Sometimes he would be seen hurrying along like a madman, as if he were laboring under some temporary aberration of mind.

At other times he would seat himself on the beach, where he had been so frequently seen with Flora, contemplating with her the angry ocean, dashing its frothy waves at their feet below. Whilst the young maiden would intone with a clear and melodious voice the canticle which Rene had composed for her. Sometimes he would bury himself in the inmost recesses of the forest, whence he would return only at a late hour in the evening.

Study became for him his only refuge and consolation, as it was before his acquaintance with Flora. He now commenced to pen the first pages of his "Genius of Christianity," that immortal work that has penetrated into all parts of the world.

He devoted to this work even a part of his nights, so long and frequent were his vigils. Oftentimes was he surprised, even standing under the street-lamp taking note in pencil of the ideas and inspirations that occurred to him.

Norfolk recalled to his mind only bitter reminiscences; he languished like a plant deprived of its refreshing dew. Every day he visited his faithful friend McNamara, and spent frequent evenings with Father Souel, discussing literature and philosophy.

One day he visited McNamara and informed him of his intention to abandon Norfolk. It was his design to go to Florida and Louisiana, and to visit the Natchez and other Indian tribes.

Rene, why flee from our shores? exclaimed McNamara. Sincere friends surround you with tender devotedness, and is not Norfolk, as I have often heard you repeat, your adopted country? has it then no longer any charm for your thoughts and meditations?

Seek not to shake my resolution, my friend, replied Rene; my destiny must take its course.

Our life is subject to events which Heaven sends us. We are the sport of its influence, and our resolutions are often formed without our doubting of the ways that Providence marks out for them. Heaven has pronounced its sentence. I bear away with me the remembrance of Norfolk, and the soul of Flora will follow me from shore to shore like a friendly echo of her heavenly affections.

Spring says to the butterfly, behold the season, the season of dreams, of poetic illusions, and at the same time the sad harbinger of cruel deceptions. The sum-

mer embroiders our fields with gold, and autumn reaps our harvests for the days of winter's repast.

Man follows the course of nature, and the phases of his existence mark the seasons of his terrestrial duration.

My spring time is over. Adieu! aurora of bright days, your garland of roses is faded and its fragrance has departed forever.

I now see my season of summer following in the train. The hour for labor has struck; have we not, each one of us, our task to perform here below?

Pioneer of thought, pilgrim of life, wandering from pole to pole. I seek man in the aspirations of his genius. From the palaces of kings to the Indian's cabin, I evoke his soul, I sound his heart, and I ask him why he exists? His answer is everywhere the same, his needs are the same. The deceptive mirage of hope, desire and ambition constantly allures him over the parched and dreary deserts of life, only to desert him one day, thus exposing to him, to his deep and bitter chagrin, the cold and cheerless reality in all its nakedness.

Shall we, then, be always impelled towards new shores, restless and anxious concerning the present and the future, without standing still for even one day amid the mazes of life? Cannot humanity, hoping and striving for its welfare, find the happiness of the human race?

This is what each one of us should aim at, and to attain it there is but one path open—each should do good to his neighbor. The man of genius, as well as the most obscure among us, in order to succeed in promo-

ting the welfare and happiness of the human race, has only to exercise his heart in the practice of indulgence and charity, and to inspire others with a love for their fellow-men.

I will try and follow this path in my progress through the world.

This was the last night that Rene passed in the ghost pavillion, and at Norfolk.

The night was dark, and the silence of a graveyard reigned round about. He felt himself already yielding to that first inclination to sleep, which precedes ordinarily absolute repose. His thoughts were confused and wandering, his mind was like a lamp which flickers for a moment with a struggling flame, and then apparently dies out only to flame up again with a bright and lively light, and then be suddenly extinguished forever.

At this moment his chamber was suddenly flooded with an azure phosphorescent light. A distant melody as if descending from heaven, filled the air around him, and awakened in his soul feelings of most ecstatic bliss; showers of golden stars fell around him and deluged him with torrents of bright ethereal light.

Then before his eyes a mist arose out of which Flora seemed to come forth; her brow was encircled by a bright and sparkling crown; her face emitted rays of celestial light, and she held in her hand a bouquet of white marguerites.

She smiled as in the days of her springtime and happiness.

Rene was overwhelmed with amazement.

“Rene,” said she, with a voice rich with celestial

melody, "this is the last time that you shall see me in these regions that you are preparing to depart from forever.

"I come from my celestial abode above the firmament, from those inaccessible vaults, illumined by the reflection of that divine light which forms the happiness of the elect, and the very sight of which would dazzle mortal eyes incapable of beholding their majestic splendor.

"Tell men that there is an infinite, eternal happiness, a future without end, without limit, instead of the deceitful illusions of terrestrial joys. As the flower lives only a day, as the grass of the field withers and passes away, so in like manner the longest human life will in a few moments pass away forever from the earth; but the Christian soul wings its flight above and goes to receive as a reward of its sorrows and Christian virtues, a happy immortality in the regions of eternal bliss, where I will be awaiting you one day."

Flora was borne away by angels, and the vision disappeared. Darkness again drew its thick mantle around him and left him to the cold and cheerless reality of earthly life.

XIV.

Early in the morning, according to his custom, he assisted at the early mass of Father Souel ; he was dressed in travelling costume, accompanied by McNamara.

After mass he called upon the venerable missionary : "I come to bid you farewell," he says to him ; "I depart for Louisiana."

" May God protect and bless you, my son," answered the venerable priest ; " perhaps we shall meet again some day ; we are all travellers on the earth ; our exile is everywhere."

On leaving Father Souel, he mounted one of the horses that a little negro servant was holding at the door of the church, and galloped away, without wishing to cast even a glance behind.

His parting with McNamara was affecting in the extreme. Once more he found himself alone in the forest, far removed from relations and from friends ; for if he was leaving Norfolk with sad remembrances, he could recall also the moments of happiness which

he had experienced in it, the sincere and true friends which he had found in it, and the affectionate and sympathetic welcome of the people ; even those unknown to him presented a smiling and amiable countenance, and extended to him a frank cordiality.

Above all, he had found in this peaceful town a calm and serious life, that contemplative life towards which his natural temperament inclined him. He therefore left with regret the good town of Norfolk, the cherished town where his heart was first opened to happiness and to hope. Even when leaving it, he traversed again in thought all the beautiful groves where he had sat so often the entire day, plunged in deep meditation.

Alas ! now a blighting remembrance followed him—an airy spirit—an emanation from the world flew around him and occupied his thoughts.

A sense of loneliness weighed heavily upon him ! a loneliness deep and overwhelming.

It was whilst engaged in his travels in Louisiana that Chateaubriand wrote his two immortal eclogues of Rene and Atala, during his sojourn among the Natchez. The remembrance of Flora inspired him with the sublime letter of Rene to Atala. One day he found Father Souel among the savages in Louisiana and committed to him the manuscript of the two romances.

Returning to France after the revolution, his writings placed him in the first rank. As minister and ambassador, he exerted by his genius a powerful influence over the destinies of his country.

The learned writers have criticised the style of Chateaubriand. They find it, they say, turgid and bombastic. But all great geniuses of the world have rendered homage to his surprising genius. It matters little what the critics may say, who have not been sufficiently endowed by nature to appreciate what is marvellous in his style.

We may say of Chateaubriand that he is a poet in prose. In each of his sentences there is a charming and delightful cadence. Every word is armed with a thought, and with the genial tone of his writings there is blended a melancholy sweetness that is unspeakably affecting. Every phrase is music to the soul ; he always wrote with his heart throbbing with emotion ; they are not sentences but strophes of emotion, the recital of which fascinates and electrifies you as if you were hearing a celestial concert.

When reading him you live in an ethereal world, whose *mirage* charms you like a dream.

There has been published after the death of Chateaubriand, a biographical notice, in which he renders a most brilliant homage to this sublime poet, this grand genius, who revealed to the world the "Genius of Christianity."

Chateaubriand died in 1849 at a very advanced age. During his whole life his spirit preserved a tinge of sadness and melancholy, like a tree struck by lightning ever bears on its bark the traces of the thunderbolt.

His ashes repose now on a little rock, an islet, on the shore of St. Malo in Brittany, his native country.

Every rising tide separates the islet from the shore.

In this region, under a dark and clouded sky, the sea is ever grand and majestic. During a storm the billows foam and break against the rock, which momentarily disappears, submerged by the waves, which sometimes engulf the tomb of Chateabriand. The remembrance of Flora's death led him, no doubt, to select this place of burial on the sea shore. A simple stone marks his grave, a cross is traced upon it, with only this inscription, without a name,

“ HERE LIES A CHRISTIAN.”

There the eternal murmuring of the deep lulls to rest his ashes, and the gently undulating waters repeat to him continually in their plaintive melody the beloved name of Flora

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